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ABSTRACT
                The relationship between psychosocial and cultural factors
as potential mediators of intercultural group conflict among adolescents was
studied. The study population for this ongoing study consists of mostly
adolescent males aged 13 to 18 years who are attending court schools in
California, and who are likely to be on probation or in restricted
residential placements. Phase I activities of the study center on
establishing new cultural measures and developing a better understanding of
the targeted population by using a sample of San Jose County, urban high
school students. In Phase 2, over 200 targeted youth will participate in an
intervention in the court-operated schools that will provide skills training
and cultural awareness and sensitivity training. This study focuses on the
Phase 1 study of 205 local high school students and more than 400 adolescents
representing the target population. Existing cultural measures were adapted
for the surveys, and a new measure was developed. Phase 1 findings lead to
challenging questions about intergroup and intragroup variability across
cultural and gender groups. Results suggest the importance of cultural
factors in intercultural group relations and in the psychosocial functioning
of adolescent youths. Questions remain regarding the developmental
differences among adolescents. (Contains one table and four references.)
(SLD)

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS IN INTERCULTURAL GROUP CONFLICT AND SOCIAL PROBLEM BEHAVIORS AMONG HIGH RISK YOUTH: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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Introduction

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between psychosocial and cultural factors as potential mediators of intercultural group conflict among adolescents. In keeping with a Bandura's (1997) social cognitive learning model, this project is examining each of the following contexts: (1) group and contextual influences (i.e., group conditions that promote positive intergroup relations); (2) cognitive processes, including developmental processes (e.g., identity and cultural identity formation); and (3) behavioral skills (i.e., social skills for effective interpersonal and intercultural interactions, including bicultural self-efficacy).

The study population consists of mostly adolescent males aged 13-18 years who reside within two northern Californian counties who are attending California "court schools", and who are likely to be on probation, if not currently in restricted residential placements making them "wards of the court". The population of concern to this study is referred to by probation officials as adolescents who are "known to the courts". The two counties in northern California were selected because each encompass large culturally diverse cities (Oakland and San Jose), and therefore, allow for adequate samples of adolescents who are African-American, Latino, Asian-Americans and White non-Latinos.

This project has both research and intervention components. Project activities are divided into two major phases one for each of the two years of the project. Phase 1 activities center on establishing new cultural measures and on developing a better understanding of the targeted population using a sample of adolescents from local high schools within San Jose. Over 200 adolescents completed questionnaires containing cultural measures and these data were used to establish the cultural measures. Phase 1 activities also included conducting a survey of over 400 adolescents representing largely the targeted youth population of concern to this study. The purpose of this later survey was to assess the relationship between cultural factors (i.e., ethnic identity, bicultural self-efficacy and acculturation) and intercultural group attitudes and behavior, as a means of assessing baseline conditions regarding intercultural group relations and to better understand the importance of cultural identity and knowledge in the lives of adolescent youths. This information is important for increasing our understanding of the importance of psychosocial and cultural factors among culturally diverse adolescent youth, and also for using this knowledge for developing the cultural components of the intervention curriculum to be used in Phase 2 in year two.

In Phase 2 of the project, a total of 200 youths are targeted to participate in the intervention involving court-schools operated jointly county probation and education departments in each of the two counties (Alameda and Santa Clara). The 200 youths (50 from each cultural group: African American, Latino, Asian and White non-Latinos) will be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Youths in the experimental groups will be assigned to culturally balanced subgroups in classrooms led by trained Program Leaders. These groups will take part in a 16-week, three component program that addresses (1) individual enhancement training (including interpersonal relations, communication skills, goal setting, and conflict resolution skill training), (2) cultural training (cultural awareness and sensitivity, bicultural self-efficacy, intercultural group relations and cultural identity training), and (3) community-bonding training components (through community service projects).

This report will focus on the reporting the outcome of Phase 1 activities. The report provides preliminary results from data collected over the first year of the project. Only general trends and findings are provided here, since data analysis is currently

underway. Results emanating from a more thorough analyses of the data will form the basis for the preparation of two manuscripts that will be submitted for publication during year two of the project.

Methods and Procedures

Instrument Validation and Scaling

As mentioned earlier, activities in Phase 1 were divided into two objectives involving two data collection efforts. The first objective focused on establishing new cultural measures and adapting existing ones for use in a survey of adolescents and as part of a planned intervention. These cultural measures include Jean Phinney's Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), Soriano and Bandura's Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scales (BISES), and Soriano, Weil and Collin's Pan-Acculturation Scale (PAN). The MEIM is a 26 item scale measuring the extent to which individuals poses an ethnic or cultural identity. The BISES consists of two scales; one for cultural minority members (BISES-M) and another for White-mainstream members (BISES-W). The BISES-M measures the extent to which ethnic minority members have the skills to respond effectively to the cultural demands and challenges posed to them, due to their cultural background exerted on them by members of their own ethnic group, as well as by members of the dominant culture within various life domains (e.g., school, community, family, and peers). Within these same life domains, BISES-W measures the extent to which White non-Latinos are able to respond effectively to the cultural challenges and demands, because of their cultural background, coming from ethnic minority members and from members of the White non-Latino population. The focus with the BISES is on assessing effective bicultural interpersonal skill development. The PAN, being an acculturation measure, is more a measure of participation and Immersion within American dominant culture and/or within one's culture of origin (vis a vis, food, music, social sphere, etc.).

The first two measures were previously constructed (MEIM and BISES), while the latter was newly established through this project, and based on question items largely adapted from previously established acculturation measures. A total of 205 adolescent youths from high schools in San Jose completed questionnaires containing the aforementioned measures. Data from these surveys served to establish and validate these measures and to conduct scale and item analyses on them. Participants in this validation survey were culturally diverse, but were not adjudicated youths. Hence, demographically and experientially, they did not reflect the targeted population.

Validation Results. Item and scale analyses supported the integrity of the cultural scales and measures. Alpha reliabilities for the cultural measures ranged from .71 to .89. A previously established acculturation scale (Richard Mendoza's Cultural Life Style Inventory--CLSI) was used to help validate the Pan-Acculturation Scale. Correlations between the PAN and CLSI scales proved significant for the Latino sample, which is the group the CLSI was designed for (> .64--for two of the three CLSI subscales).

"Known to the Court Sample" Survey

This survey contained the cultural measures that were included in the validation survey, but also contained outcome measures, such as on intergroup relations, educational attitudes, delinquency, gang membership, participation in violence, alienation, and self-

esteem. Space does not permit a formal presentation of all of the findings. Hence, only general or summarative findings are offered in this report on two of the key questions guiding this phase of the project. These include:

1. Are cultural factors related to intergroup relations?

2. Are cultural factors related to social problems?

Cultural Factors, Intergroup Relations and Social Problems

Three measures of intercultural group relations were utilized in the survey. One, INTERGRP_A, is a five item attitudinal scale measuring one's affinity and attitudes towards White Americans. An example of this scale is, "My cultural beliefs are very different from that of most White Americans" (5 pt.--Agree/Disagree). On the other hand, the intercultural group scale called, INTERGRP_B, measures more behavioral practices towards culturally diverse populations. An example of this 8 item scale is, "I try not to be around African American people" (5 pt. Agree/Disagree). A third scale called, AVERS (short for aversion), is a 6 item scale assessing aversive reactions towards culturally different groups. A sample item from this scale is, "I feel uncomfortable around people from cultural groups other than my own" (5 pt. Agree/Disagree).

Correlation coefficients between cultural measures and intercultural group relations suggest that for the entire sample taken as a whole, there is indeed a relationship between cultural factors and intercultural group relations. That is, the findings suggest that both attitudes and behaviors towards culturally different groups are, with only a few exceptions, related to each of the dominant cultural variables of interest to this study (e.g., bicultural self-efficacy, acculturation and ethnic identity). The main exception shown on Table 1 with the lack of a significant correlation between ethnic identity (MEIM) and intercultural group attitudes.

BISES. It is interesting to note a negative correlation between BISES and intercultural group attitudes among ethnic minority members, but a positive correlation for White respondents. These findings suggest that for minorities bicultural self-efficacy is associated with less negative intercultural group attitudes, but this trend is reversed for non-minorities. However, BISES is inversely correlated with behavioral intercultural group conflict, which is more directly *inter*cultural, while INTERGRP_A focuses more on the respondent's relationship with Whites. BISES is negatively associated with adverse feelings towards culturally different groups for both minorities and non-minorities.

Regarding cultural factors and social problems, BISES appears to be associated positively with self-esteem (.16, p <.05), and inversely with violence (-.14, p < .05) for both minorities and non-minorities.

PAN. Higher scores on acculturation indicate greater immersion into American mainstream culture, while lower scores suggest greater immersion in one's second cultural group or culture of origin. The results show acculturation is significantly associated with poor intercultural group relations--be they attitudinal or behavioral (INTERGRP_A, INTERGRP_B, respectively). Table 1 shows that the direction or valence of this correlation is reversed for Whites for attitudes--INTERGRP_A. So that for minorities, the greater the acculturation to White society, the greater the negative attitudes and relations to Whites, while for Whites, the greater the acculturation to White

mainstream culture the less negative the attitudes towards White non-minorities. Generally speaking these findings can be taken to suggest that the more acculturated minority youth are to mainstream culture the more the interaction to White culture perhaps leading to negative experiences due to prejudice and discrimination, hence, the greater the intercultural group conflict. These preliminary findings are taken to suggest the possible need for training for minority youth to help them cognitively understand and interpersonally respond to individuals in mainstream culture (i.e., bicultural self-efficacy training).

Interestingly, regarding acculturation and social problems, the findings do not reveal a significant correlation with various social problems for both minority and non-minority groups.

MEIM. Table 1 shows ethnic identity is not associated with INTERGRP_A attitudes, but is linked negatively with intercultural group conflict and adverse attitudes toward culturally different groups (ADVERS). These findings point to the important role of ethnic identity in intercultural group relations among particularly culturally diverse youth, but also for non-minorities, as well.

Regarding MEIM and social problems the findings indicate a positive relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem (.17, $p < .05$), but an inverse relationship with violence (-.12, $p < .05$) and alcohol use (-.18, $p < .05$). This relationship is observed in both minority and non-minorities. Alcohol use and ethnic identity is particularly strong between alcohol and ethnic identity for White respondents (-.44, $p < .01$). Taken as a whole, these findings regarding ethnic identity point to its importance in intercultural group conflict and link to social problem outcomes.

CLSI. CLSI is another acculturation measure and one that, in its non-adapted form, was designed for Mexican Americans, however, was adapted for use by culturally diverse population. While somewhat weaker in its relationship, CLSI is negatively related with intercultural group relations--attitudinally and behaviorally. That is, the results show that the more the acculturated youth is to dominant culture the less the intercultural group conflict--attitudinally and behaviorally.

Regarding CLSI's relationship with social problems, it is interesting to note that it lacks a significant association with social problems for the entire sample as a whole. However, CLSI is associated positively with self-esteem (.29, $p < .05$), but negatively with gang membership for Whites (-.34, $p < .05$), but not ethnic minority members.

Methodological and Procedural Issues

Phase 1 of the study has pointed to several methodological and procedural issues worth noting. One of the most important is the challenge in measuring cultural factors. While there is increased recognition of the psychosocial importance of cultural factors across cultural groups, such as acculturation (c.f., Landrine and Klonoff, 1996) and bicultural self-efficacy (LaFromboise et al., 1993), measurements are currently lacking that are applicable to various ethnic groups. Jean Phinney has made greater advances in the measurement of ethnic identity through her Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), which we are using. Moreover, there is a need to clearly define and distinguish each cultural measure in order to better assess the relevance of each to various research efforts.

Our project is particularly challenging because we are attempting to break new ground by introducing new cultural measures, including those measuring intercultural group conflict. The main methodological challenge has been in making these new measures conceptually meaningful and easy to respond to by adolescent respondents. With every iteration or draft of either the Pan-Acculturation Scale or the Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale, we have tried to either interview individual youths and/or to hold focus groups on the conceptual understanding of these new measures. Adolescents have little patients to complete long surveys and are particularly fastidious about one single long section within a survey associated with one measure. Both surveys in Phase 1 have taught us much and this learning has led to significant changes to both the BISES and the Pan-Acculturation Scale. Thanks to the survey data, interviews and focus groups conducted during Phase 1, the BISES has been shortened significantly, and we are particularly excited about the introduction of a new shorter and easy-to-respond to version of the PAN (now 24 items). Moreover, we are pleased with the three intercultural group conflict measures. While much has been written about intercultural group conflict, few measures exist that allow for more than measuring conflict between two cultural groups. Our conflict measures, while not comprehensive, appear to be good measures of particularly behavioral self-reported intercultural group conflict.

Potential Implications of Study Findings: New Questions or Issues for Research

As mentioned earlier, our data analysis continues as this report is being written. Analyses are particularly needed that look at differences between each major cultural group. One of the biggest challenges facing researchers working with culturally diverse populations has to do with not only working with different major cultural groups and with developing or adapting existing measures accordingly, but also with the intra-cultural group variability--not to mention gender differences. The challenge is both to analyze the data to examine inter-cultural group differences and to have enough participants in a sample to examine intra-cultural group variation, as well. Unfortunately, funding for these types of studies do not allow for the collection of sufficiently large numbers of participants to adequately examine intra-group variability.

The more the cultural variability of a sample, the more challenging is the adaptation or the development of new measures, since cultural subgroup differences necessitate being attuned to differences in the cultural relevance and to the meaning of questionnaire items to culturally diverse populations. However, we expect that Phase 1 data will at the very least point to the importance of examining intercultural and intra-cultural group variability. However, our sample sizes will not enable us to be definitive about intergroup differences, let alone intra-group and gender differences.

In conclusion, our experience during Phase 1 of the project leads to challenging questions regarding intergroup and intragroup variability across cultural and gender groups. The results of our data collection efforts thus far, suggest the importance of cultural factors in intercultural group relations and in the psychosocial functioning of adolescent youths. Other questions remain regarding developmental differences among adolescents. For example, recent focus groups with early, middle and late aged adolescents pointed to significant differences between them in their understanding of cultural concepts, such as "ethnic identity" or "cultural groups". This finding suggests the need to provide adolescents establish a baseline understanding of key research concepts--in this case, on cultural and intercultural group concepts. Research is needed that pays attention to cultural, developmental and gender variations, but to do so, research projects need to have sufficient funding to recruit significant numbers of participants.

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Table 1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CULTURAL FACTORS
AND INTERCULTURAL GROUP RELATIONS

	INTERGRP_A	INTERGRP_B	AVERS
BISES	-.22**/.32	-.34**/-.65**	-.38**/-.37**
(Minority (M)/non-Minority (NM))			
PAN (Total Sample)	.35**	.14*	.17**
(M/NM)	.34**/-.20	.10/.13	.09/.258
MEIM	-.07	-.37**	-.48**
(M/NM)	-.07/-.25	-.41**/-.34*	-.57**/-.16
CLSI	.13**	.21**	.16**
(M/NM)	.12/-.14	.20**/-.37*	.12*/-.14

* p < .05
** p < .01

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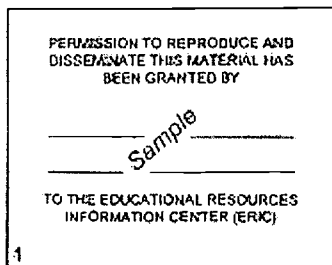Author(s): Soriano, Fernando I.

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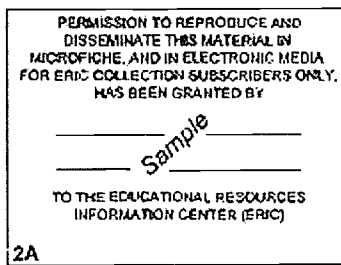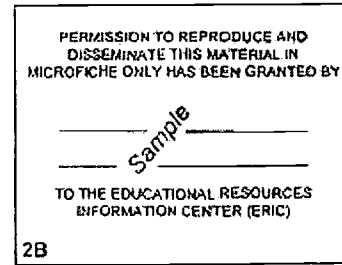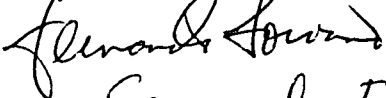| ___ Permission is granted to the Educational Resources information Center (ERIC) to reproduce and disseminate this material in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) *and* paper copy	___ Permission is granted to the Educational Resources information Center (ERIC) to reproduce and disseminate this material in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	___ Permission is granted to the Educational Resources information Center (ERIC) to reproduce and disseminate this material in microfiche only
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